The Builder.

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THOUGH all persons admit that good architecture should have every adjunct in keeping, yet how rarely do we find the furniture of an edifice corresponding with the style of the fabric in which it is placed. The great expense of purchasing furniture all in one style may be sufficient excuse for those whose mansions are large, whose means are limited, or who possess heir-looms, which dutiful respect, if not absolute conditions of inheritance, occasion to be kept. But even where means are abundant, the whole purchased at once, and no conditions or shackles are attached to the purchase, the choice, or the keeping, we constantly see the effects of evil taste.

We lately went into a mansion furnished under such circumstances, wherein all the ordinary faults had been fallen into, with the addition of some peculiar to the occasion. The style of decoration throughout the architecture partook of that of Grinling Gibbons, but evidently subdued in quantity and richness, so as to suit the restrictions of a limited expenditure. In the dining-room we found placed a chimney-glass in a plain frame, partaking of a Grecian character, over the windows were curtain-cornices, exhibiting an open outbreak into that branch of dry, hard Elizabethan or Jacobine carving, which consists of a curious interlacing of strap-work; the other furniture of the room betrayed as many changeful anomalies. In the drawing-room, which was more fully enriched in Gibbons's style, there was more of harmony among the furniture itself, which, however, being in the worst and most fallen state of decoration in the French style of the age of Louis XV., contrasted with the room most unfavourably, with its mean, broken, and tattered scroll-work, in which was not to be found one particle of ornament suited to any other purpose than a mere taudry shewing-off of gilding. In the principal chamber we found the chief piece of furniture absolutely a cabinet-maker's French-polished example of Gothic. The only room in the house not offensively furnished was the library, which, containing every thing plain and good, without any finery, was, without any pretensions to taste, really the most tasteful. Now, if in this house five hundred pounds' expenditure in finery had been saved, more honour and credit would have been justly due to the master, and half that sum would have carved every door and shutter throughout the whole, and have given an air of princely finish which the upholsterer, with all his vagaries, cannot produce, however costly they may be.

We need an entire new school of upholstery-ware. We do not mean to say that much good furniture is not made; but we insist upon it, that for one really good article, at least a hundred of frippery are manufactured; and this very frippery, because it is costly, finds its way into the houses of the rich, and not unfrequently into those of the noble. The design of furniture is a matter of genius; not every architect can design it, for not every one has sufficient invention; and cabinet-makers and their designers almost invariably hash up with it in a most ludicrous manner the tatters of different styles of architecture, which anomalies are rarely found in old furniture. Now we are not going to fall off into a high-mettled race after every article of household stuff, merely because it is old. We have no objection whatever to modern comfort; but we desire to have that, and taste conjoined: old furniture is often freely and elegantly designed, yet as often very rudely executed. What we desire is to see come into general use good, well-formed, substantial furniture, so well designed and executed, that a man having it left him by his ancestors may not desire to turn it adrift, but to value and keep it from the united motives of respect to the donors and value of its intrinsic merit. If the inundation of inferior old furniture which has during the last five-and-twenty years found its way to Britain from the Continent obtain so much praise, what should be the rank and appreciation of modern furniture of the character which we desire to be introduced and generally adopted?

What is now more common than the placing at the altar of a church a couple of polluted, worm-eaten Dutch chairs, of the age of William III., which, after having been applied to all manner of profane uses and having played flotsum and jetsum in old garrets and brokers' shops, at length come unpurged in their rotten ness to the sanctuary?

What is now more common than the finding placed on the communion-table itself old dishes and vessels which, after having been treated worse than Belshazzar treated the sacred vessels of Solomon's Temple, after many a carousal, come in their filthiness from a Jew's store-house of curiosities, and are used for receiving the consecrated elements themselves, although they as little accord with the remainder of the vessels of the communion as the Dutch chairs do with the building or its other furniture?

Again, in the matter of stained glass there is a most lamentable barbarism going forward. Men who because they obtain their bread by painting, glazing, paper-hanging, composition application, and general knick-knack work, fancy themselves capable of touching higher things, are ruining, at as great an expense as they are allowed, the effect of some of our best churches. No matter is it to them whatever be the style of the field of their operations, they set up with their imagined improvements whatever comes to hand.

Thus we see in the church of Saint John the Evangelist, at Westminster, an old altar-window, not good of its kind and out of taste for the fabric, usurping the place of a good and suitable subject. Again, in St. George's Church, Hanover-square, which is a fine church of the second class, lately an immense altar-window, and two accompanying side-windows have been glazed with fragments of gaudy frippery taken from a still larger window of wretched character, and which even any novice ought to know, with its corrupt ornaments, is not even decently applied to such a place; and yet, no doubt, the self-satisfied parties who profaned the church with this trash, admiring their own tasteless, perverted ignorance, would pull down the portico, and perform various other vagaries to the edifice, which we trust, however, will outlive them and their corruption, though perhaps the Protestant bishop catching sight of the Virgin Mary as the Queen of Heaven in this very glass will order its removal. We give this instance as one of a class whereby money is squandered, sacred architecture injured, and wreckers are let loose upon the temple, that if possible the plague may be arrested. Church furniture, church glazing, and church decoration require regeneration, but, as in the case of household upholstery, a particular education as well as genius are needed for the work.

Through man's perverseness, the history and practice of architecture are strange things: the Elizabethan practitioner spoiled Pointed architecture; the revived classical architect supplants it; in return, the zealot, ignorant of all architecture, as though fulfilling the terms of a lease, paints, glazes, purges, cleanses, and amends according to his imagination the classical architect's labour; and then in a few years will come another race, who, continuing the see-saw work, will undo more than all the mischief which the zealot has perpetrated; thus we have a constant succession of broken subjects of architecture, while we should have, from the same outlay and industry, purity, completeness, and twice as much in quantity. The taste of few zealots is pure, few zealots build well or soundly, few zealots do any thing which can last,—for the zealot is not steady enough to weigh in his mind matters of purity of taste, or of construction, or of fitness; calmer men at calmer times have to undo the zealot's work. The designing architecture, furniture, and decorations requires zeal, but not the zealot's zeal; the zealot's zeal despises all but his own fancy and opinions; the right zeal examines industriously the works of all men and all times, but despises none but the bad, the profane, the mean, and the impure.

D.

ELECTION OF SURVEYORS TO THE NEW DISTRICTS IN THE COUNTY OF MIDDLESEX.

THE election of surveyors to the nine new districts, viz. Fulham, Hammersmith, South Kensington, North Kensington, Hampstead, Hornsey, Tottenham, Stoke Newington, and Bromley, will take place at the Middlesex County Sessions' House, Clerkenwell-green, on Thursday, the 28th instant.

On future occasions, ten days before the day appointed for the election of any district surveyor, each person proposing to become a candidate must personally attend before the committee for general purposes, and produce satisfactory evidence that he is of the full age of thirty years; and also a certificate from the Board of Examiners, appointed under the Act, of their approval; and such other evidence of qualification as the committee may require, before authorizing him to be admitted as a candidate.

THE CAMBRIDGE CAMDEN SOCIETY AND "THE ECCLESIOLOGIST."

IT seems this society, alarmed at the disrepute which the disgusting writings published under the above false title have brought upon it in the religious, the scientific, and the architectural world, has given the "right about" to the offensive issue, and disclaims all further connection with it.

IMPROVEMENTS IN GALWAY.—The drainage of Lough Corrib, Galway, will be commenced early in the spring of 1845, and there is to be a canal communication to the sea.

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